

Note: The recipes accompanying this article are reprinted exactly as they were published in the 1800s. Each recipe is followed by my "Notes for the Modern Cook" – a guide to making the recipes in the twenty-first century.

CARROT PUDDING

One and a half cups flour, one cup sugar, one cup suet, one cup raisins, one cup currants, one cup potatoes grated, one cup carrots grated, one teaspoon soda; steam or boil three hours.

*This recipe is from **The Home Cook Book**, compiled from recipes contributed by ladies from Toronto and other cities and towns for the benefit of the Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto, 1877), p 197. Reproduced by Canadiana.org (CIHM 95365).*

NOTES FOR THE MODERN COOK

This is the first recipe published in a Canadian cookbook for carrot pudding, which would become the cheaper, lighter and favourite alternative to plum pudding in early-twentieth-century Ontario. At Christmastime there would have been plenty of carrots and potatoes in the root cellar.

Mrs. McMaster, who contributed the recipe, assumed the cook would add to taste her own ground spices: for example, 1 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg, and 1/4 tsp ground cloves. I suggest using brown sugar, adding an egg to help bind the mixture together, plus 1/4 cup candied peel, a common ingredient in later versions. Spoon the mixture into a pudding bowl or other heatproof container and cover with aluminum foil, waxed or parchment paper, or a cloth secured with string. Place the bowl on a trivet in a large covered saucepan (the ring from a preserving jar or 3 upside-down spoons will also keep the bowl from direct contact with the pan bottom); fill the pan with water to halfway up the side of the bowl. Boil for 3 hours.

Serve with a hot sauce: 1 cup brown sugar, 2 tbsp flour, a pinch of salt and 2 cups water, simmered together for 10 minutes. Stir in 4 tbsp butter, 4 tsp white vinegar, 1/4 tsp ground nutmeg, 1/4 tsp cinnamon, a pinch of ground cloves, 2 tsp vanilla.



BIRD'S NEST PUDDING

If you wish to make Bird's Nest Pudding, make very good custard ready for baking, take as many good apples as you have custard prepared for; pare them and take the cores out with a small knife that they may be whole; set them in a pudding dish, and pour your custard [the unbaked mixture for A Rich Baked Custard] over them, just so as to cover them; bake until the apples are done, and the custard settles down a little. Eat it while warm.

A RICH BAKED CUSTARD

Boil a pint [2 cups] of cream, and cool it so as not to scald the eggs; then take four well-beaten eggs, then add nutmeg and sugar to taste; mix them well, and bake it slowly until it rises; be sure not to let it stand in the oven after it is done.

*These recipes are from **The Frugal Housewife's Manual** (Toronto, 1840), pp 8, 11. Reproduced by Canadiana.org (CIHM 90013).*

NOTES FOR THE MODERN COOK

Bird's Nest Pudding is simply a sweetened and spiced custard mixture poured over peeled and cored apples, then baked. Choose small McIntosh apples or other small apples with a delicate flesh that will cook quickly in the custard. There is no need to boil or scald the cream first, but warming it will help to dissolve the sugar. If you don't have a casserole with edges as high as the apples are tall, then use a large pie plate and cut the apples in half horizontally. Cutting them in half also ensures that the apples cook by the time the custard has set, and if first peeled and halved, it's easier to remove the core without breaking the fruit. I used about 1/4 cup sugar to 2 cups whipping cream, 4 eggs and nutmeg, and found that this amount of custard and 4 or 5 halved apples filled a large pie plate (individual custard cups would work well, too). Bake at 325°F until the custard has set, about 25 to 30 minutes. A knife inserted into the custard should come out clean. □

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*This is the first article Liz has written for her "Food Roots" column, which will appear in every issue of *Edible Toronto*.*